

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, US

SUBJECT: INVITATIONS TO SYRIAN MINISTERS TO VISIT U.S.

1. DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED COPIES OF LETTERS FROM ALLIS-CHALMERS CHAIRMAN SCOTT TO SECRETARIES OF COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE PROPOSING THAT THEY INVITE SYRIAN EUPHRATES DAM MINISTER KAHHALA, ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER IMADI, AND ELECTRICITY MINISTER SAWWAF TO VISIT U.S. ACCORDING TO SCOTT LETTER,AS OUTGROWTH OF SCOTT'S AUGUST VISIT TO SYRIA, BOTH COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE SECRETARIES HAVE ALREADY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE IDEA OF EXTENDING THESE INVITATIONS.

2. IDEA OF INVITATION TO KAHHALA APPEARS WORTHWHILE.
U.S. HAS MUCH TO OFFER IN AREA OF RECLAMATION AND IRRIGA-
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TION ACTIVITIES AND OUR AID PROGRAM IN SYRIA IS INCREASING-

LY INVOLVED IN THESE AREAS. HOWEVER, WE ARE MORE SKEPTICAL OF OTHER TWO PROPOSALS. PROGRAM SUGGESTED FOR IMADI AND SAWWAF--A VISIT TO ALLIS-CHALMERS AND TO OTHER GROUPS IN THE MIDWEST TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION OF BENEFITS TO SYRIA OF U.S. TECHNOLOGY--APPEARS A BIT NARROW TO JUSTIFY OFFICIAL USG INVITATION. IMADI HAS VISITED THE U.S. OFTEN AND ALREADY KNOWS THE U.S. FAIRLY WELL; WE ARE CONCERNED

THAT EXCESSIVE U.S. ATTENTION MIGHT DO HIM A DISSERVICE IN SYRIAN INTERNAL POLITICAL TERMS. WE ARE ALSO UNCERTAIN REGARDING REAL BENEFIT TO BE GAINED FROM SAWWAF VISIT. QUESTIONS OF FUNDING AND OF ITINERARY AND PROGRAM CONTROL FOR PROPOSED VISITS ARE YET TO BE RESOLVED.

3. ACTION: WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS ASAP RE ADVISABILITY OF PROPOSED INVITATIONS AND ANY IDEAS YOU MAY WISH TO ADD CONCERNING ITINERARY AND FUNDING ISSUES. WE WILL CO-ORDINATE HERE WITH CU, AID, AND AGRICULTURE AS APPROPRIATE UPON RECEIPT OF YOUR REPLY. KISSINGER

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